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ABSTRACT

Representatives of the media of the United States and Mexico discussed issues concerning the expanding interdependence of the two countries, including trade and development, energy, migration, bilateral and regional relations, and the role of the press in these affairs. Some suggested perspectives include (1) images of the past are the biggest source of misunderstanding between the two countries; (2) many Mexicans believe that the United States is mainly interested in Mexico for its oil reserves; (3) immigration is the single most pressing factor in bilateral relations, and the problem can't be erased through unilateral measures; (4) news services prejudice many issues in the bilateral relationship; (5) Mexico is having an increased impact on its neighbors and is fourth on the list of U.S. trading partners; and (6) U.S.-Mexican relationships have benefited from the perceptions of equality and nondependence. The symposium provided opportunities for increasing understanding between Mexico and the United States and for diminishing the misperceptions that have hampered these relations. (Author/NE)

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

SECOND UNITED STATES-MEXICO COMMUNICATION MEDIA SYMPOSIUM

Held at
Oaxtepec, Mexico

Sponsored by
Asociacion de Editores de Periodicos Diarios de la Republica Mexicana
and
The American Committee of the International Press Institute

with assistance from
The Mexican Social Security Institute
and
The Johnson Foundation
November 13-16, 1979

Report Prepared by Robert Harris

SP 014 305

PREFACE

In March 1979, The Johnson Foundation joined with the American Committee of the International Press Institute (IPI) in a symposium of media leaders from Mexico and the United States. The symposium was held at Wingspread, the educational conference center of The Johnson Foundation in Racine, Wisconsin. That meeting opened a conversation long overdue.

Participants hoped that the fruitful discussions begun at Wingspread would lead to continuing contacts, communication and exchanges between representatives of the media of the two countries.

Continuation of the discussions came more quickly than had been at first expected. In July 1979, word was received that Mexican media leaders would like to organize a meeting to follow Mexican President Lopez Portillo's September visit to Washington. The American Committee of IPI and The Johnson Foundation were invited to organize United States participation for a November 1979 meeting in Mexico.

President Jose Lopez Portillo of Mexico greets William Block, vice chairman of the International Press Institute, and other leaders of the Oaxtepec Symposium.

The meeting place in Mexico was Oaxtepec, a place that had been a favorite retreat of Montezuma (Moctezuma) and later the site of the Hospital de la Santa Cruz (1569). Today, Oaxtepec is a splendid national resort-convention center operated by the Mexican Social Security Institute.

At Oaxtepec the discussions that had begun at Wingspread continued in greater depth.

A great deal of appreciation is due to many individuals and institutions in Mexico -- especially to the management and personnel of the Mexican Social Security Institute and to Mexico City Mayor Carlos Hank Gonzalez -- for making the meetings possible in such beautiful settings and for unforgettable hospitality that included opportunities to see places of great cultural interest and outstanding performances of music and dance.

The symposium concluded with a reception at Los Pinos, the residence of Mexico's president. President Lopez Portillo told the conference participants that the subjects of the symposium followed closely those discussed in Washington by the two heads of state. He said he was pleased that communication was taking place openly on these topics between media leaders of the two countries and urged on-going communication as essential in solving problems that exist.

The report that follows illuminates the current relationship between Mexico and the United States. The frank discussions recorded here took place between leaders of the media and government of the two countries. They point to differences of perception growing out of different histories. The views expressed suggest how sharing perceptions can lead to seeing some issues in new ways, to better mutual understanding and, as President Lopez Portillo stated, to solution of problems, both long-term problems and new ones arising out of new realities.

In providing information and influencing public attitudes on matters important to relations between the two countries, the media play a significant role. This report will be of interest to journalists. It will also be of interest to citizens on both sides of the border who are interested in promoting understanding and cooperation between Mexico and the United States.

Henry Halsted

Henry Halsted
Vice President
The Johnson Foundation

Enrique Ramirez y Ramirez

Richard H. Leonard

FOREWORD

There was something about Oaxtepec that prompted clear thinking and frank discussion.

Maybe it was the resemblance to Shangri-La, the idyllic utopia of movie fame. Oaxtepec was a magic setting, profuse with tropical flowers, sparkling fountains and pools, grass and trees as green as emeralds, a bright sun made comfortable by a cooling breeze.

Mexican and United States journalists met in a lofty conference tower with a commanding view which included distant volcanoes.

What better place could there have been to make an intellectual assault upon "a formidable wall formed by more than 100 years of non-communication, reiterated hostility and distrust." Those were the words used by Enrique Ramirez y Ramirez of *El Dia* to describe the lack of understanding between Mexico and the United States.

There was open and honest talk about instinctive anti-Americanism in Mexico, and greed for oil in the U.S. that was creating new interest in its neighbor to the south.

There appeared to be general agreement that people on both sides of the border looked at each other in racist ways and really haven't come to know each other deeply.

There could be no denying that the media has a great task in putting the relationship of the countries in true perspective and creating a two-way cultural flow.

Oaxtepec was a continuation of a dialog between journalists which began at Wingspread in Wisconsin. How successful was it? In the words of Ramirez y Ramirez, "In the span of this seminar more in-depth things have been said about both our countries than have been said in many years by American and Mexican newspapers, magazines and books. . . ."

Ramirez y Ramirez also spoke of "tremendous and final need for us to coexist . . . minimizing differences, eliminating injustice."

For Ramirez y Ramirez, the effort ended with his death in August 1980.

For the other participants, the challenge remains to achieve the goals of coexistence outlined so well in the spell of Oaxtepec.

Richard H. Leonard

Richard H. Leonard
Chairman
American Committee
International Press Institute

Enrique Ramirez y Ramirez, editor, El Dia, addressing the symposium.

. . . opportunities for diminishing the misperceptions that have hampered this relationship for so long.

THE OAXTEPEC REPORT

Journalists and media leaders from the United States and Mexico met November 13-16, 1979, for their second symposium on U.S.-Mexican relations. The meeting, held at the Mexican Social Security Institute's beautiful vacation and conference center at Oaxtepec, 70 miles south of Mexico City, continued the dialogue that had begun eight months earlier at Wingspread, the conference center of The Johnson Foundation at Racine, Wisconsin.

Many of the subjects discussed — trade and development, energy, migration, bilateral and regional relations, and the role of the press in these affairs — were the same as those that arose at the first conference. They are issues that will be on the agenda of the two countries for many years to come.

The difference was that, in this second meeting, the journalists established a greater degree of communication and an increased ability to see these issues from the point of view of the other country as well as their own.

Both Mexican and American participants agreed that the symposium provided opportunities for increased understanding of important aspects of bilateral relations and for diminishing the misperceptions that have hampered these relations for so long.

After welcoming words by Antonio Andere, chairman of the Asociacion de Editores de Periodicos Diarios de Mexico, United States Charge d'Affaires John Ferch presented opening remarks on behalf of the American participants. He spoke of developments in the two countries and the consultative mechanism put into effect by Presidents Jose Lopez Portillo and Jimmy Carter after their first meeting, in Washington in 1977.

Consultative Mechanism

Members of the Consultative Mechanism working groups are in daily contact on trade, migration, environmental, scientific and fishing affairs, and many other aspects of the relationship born of a 2,000-mile common border. This daily contact based on shared interests is the substance of bilateral cooperation, Ferch said.

Coordinating the Consultative Mechanism activities in Washington at the time of the Oaxtepec meeting was U.S. Ambassador-at-large Robert Krueger. At a luncheon appearance on the second day of the proceedings, Krueger explained that his appointment arose from the need to unite the activities of the many governmental units involved in U.S.-Mexico policy formulation. He listed the eight areas into which the mechanism is divided: energy, trade, finance, migration, legal affairs, industry, tourism and border cooperation.

United States Charge d'Affaires John A. Ferch (left) and Antonio Andere, chairman of Mexico's Association of Daily Newspaper Editors, during the opening ceremonies of the symposium.

Ambassador-at-large Robert Krueger, United States coordinator for U.S.-Mexican affairs.

Ambassador Andres Rozental, director general for North American affairs, Foreign Relations Ministry of Mexico.

Virgilio Caballero, news director of Channel 11, Mexico City.

Natural Gas Agreement

The symposium took place just six weeks after the two countries' presidents had held their third formal visit, a visit which was more cordial because of the fact that a mutually beneficial agreement on Mexican natural gas sales to the U.S. had recently been signed.

"That agreement removed the biggest symbol of misunderstanding," Krueger said, adding that if the agreement had been signed during the two presidents' second meeting, in Mexico in February 1979, it would have dwarfed any other agreements because of the magnitude of its importance.

Ambassador Andres Rozental, director of North American affairs at Mexico's Ministry of Foreign Relations, predicted that the mutual advantages of such trade pacts would mark the future course of bilateral relations.

Legacy of Misunderstanding

Many of the Mexican participants expressed a feeling that images of the past are the biggest source of misunderstanding between the two countries.

"We face a formidable wall formed by more than 100 years of non-communication, reiterated hostility and distrust," said Enrique Ramirez y Ramirez, editor of the Mexico City daily *El Dia*. As the meeting opened, he called for the use of words as "the irreplaceable vehicle of understanding." He pleaded that clarity and frankness might permeate what he termed "weak relations."

Rozental applauded the efforts of media representatives from both countries to meet in a spirit of frank, mutual respect in search of better understanding, and Krueger added that frankness should not be mistaken for friction. He stressed that any special interest the United States showed in Mexico should be taken for what it was: a recognition of the growth in Mexico's perceived strength. "It is always better to have strong friends. Mexico is growing stronger in the hemisphere by the day," he said.

Some Mexican newsmen took a different tack. That the United States is mainly interested in Mexico for its oil reserves was an undercurrent of the three-day meeting.

"Today, due to the heightened sense of a world crisis, Mexico has reappeared as a nation important to the future of the United States. Our petroleum is looked on with greed by the industrial power to the north," said Virgilio Caballero, news director of Mexico's Channel 11. "It is also the cause of increased pressures from North Americans who want to draw us more tightly into the world market," he added.

Bill Woestendiek of the *Arizona Daily Star* took objection to this: "Such remarks are blatantly unfair, inaccurate and the sort of thing that discourages the kind of good relations we are trying to foster. If that is the kind of information being printed or broadcast, it is contrary to what we on both sides of the border are trying to do."

Caballero's remarks were representative of views often printed in Mexico. National pride is closely linked to historical grievances. Ramirez y Ramirez called for a readjustment on the part of Mexicans from the belief that Mexico is peopled by the "eternally poor" to the reality of oil wealth and the realization that the United States arrogance of the past is being tempered by its oil crisis.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs John Bushnell took a somewhat different approach. He said, "I think what creates good relations between our two countries is the free movement of people and ideas from one country to the other in both directions." This type of movement has become a way of life along the long border, where millions of Americans and Mexicans visit each other's country annually.

Ramirez y Ramirez viewed this "coexistence" as ambiguous, saying "Even though there are no two other nations with so much traffic of people and goods, cultural and political values; even though this flow should have served to make us learn to live in understanding, we have been able to trade goods but have failed in melting spiritually and culturally."

THE MELTING POT MYTH

Dr. Peter Jones, a University of Illinois history professor, recalled how 19th century commentators saw the United States as a melting pot in which all except blacks and American Indians fused over time into something called "Americans." "However," he said, "there was a hidden racist assumption that everyone would come out of the melting pot looking like WASPs (White Anglo-Saxon Protestants)."

Jones traced the arrival in the United States of European and, later, Asian immigrants. He mentioned the tacit acceptance of slavery by those who drew up the constitution, and outlined the emergence of the immigrant ethic, which said a society founded on immigrants was more open to change. The outcome, said Jones, did not conform to expectations. People

did not melt. What happened was cultural pluralism and parallel living, realities that undermined the melting pot myth.

The result of the failure to melt, according to Hector Aguilar Camin, *UnoMasUno* editorial writer, was that migrants from cultures and races alien to the Protestant European family tree did not emerge from the pot as part of the American culture. "Negroes, Chinese, Latins and Mexicans have been insoluble ingredients in the melting pot, and Mexicans," Aguilar Camin added, "are one of the minorities that were expelled from the American Dream."

Mexicans and the Immigration Picture

Jorge Bustamante, Colegio de Mexico researcher and Mexican migration expert, developed the "melting pot" thesis further with detailed historical documentation. He sketched a United States in the 1830s and 40s which welcomed European immigrants as labor for the industrialization process, but rejected them socially. Thus the Irish arrived from their famine-stricken island to fill the worst paying jobs, until they were pushed up the occupational ladder by the immigration of illiterate German peasants fleeing the 1848 Peasant Rebellion. The Germans, in turn, moved upwards as immigrants from southern European countries — Greeks, Italians and others — took their place.

Each ethnic group eventually began to be assimilated into the American social structure. But this only held true for whites, argued Bustamante. "Asian immigrants — Chinese, and then Japanese — were accepted as cheap labor. But they were not moved up the occupational ladder, but instead were physically excluded," he said. The Chinese were expelled from the United States under the first immigration laws of 1881, and the Japanese under the famous Gentlemen's Agreement.

The gap resulting from the expulsion of Japanese and Chinese was filled by Filipinos and Mexicans. "Both groups were solicited by the United States Congress, and the hearings can be read in the 41 volumes of the Dillingham Commission," he said. Bustamante explained how the commission found it convenient to bring in Mexican workers to develop and expand agriculture in the southwest because "the commission found that in contrast to the physical and racial characteristics of the white race, the Mexican was physically more suited to stoop labor." But physical features were not the only incentive to accepting Mexican immigrant labor, Bustamante continued. The Dillingham Commission described them as "having a 'gypsy spirit.' They stay in no one place, always returning to Mexico." Bustamante explained that the Mexican worker returns home to invest his earnings in Mexican goods and services that will give him access to a higher social position.

MEXICAN HERITAGE

And where do the Mexicans come from? This question was as important to Ramirez y Ramirez as knowing that the United States "is a country formed by living pieces drawn together from one or two hundred countries, different races and ethnic groups. The Mexicans also have their origin in great diversity," he said. "We come fundamentally from the nuclei of indigenous people who lived in Mexico in pre-Columbian times: the Nahuatls, Toltecs, Zapotecs, Mayans and others." He added: "We also come from the Spanish who, as you know, have strong Arab influence, and from African blacks, and we must not overlook the strong influence of the French who invaded in the 19th century. Facts are irrefutable," newspaper director Ramirez y Ramirez continued. "We have different historic roots, but Mexicans and North Americans have been placed in the same habitat."

Far more than a narrow river or a narrow line separates the two nations, said Ambassador Krueger. Unhappily, in Mexico's view, that narrow line, drawn by the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe that ended the "American War of Intervention," cost Mexico half its territory — a loss that rankles the national conscience to this day.

"We cannot simply ask that insults and struggles be forgotten," Ramirez y Ramirez said. "The past justifies the existence of so much distrust and resentment. I do not see that either the present or the future will be easy for us. I believe it will be a great task to remove the historical mountain of wrongdoings."

IMMIGRATION OR INVASION?

Ambassador Krueger called immigration the single most pressing factor in bilateral relations. Immigration has costs and benefits for both sides. Mexican immigrant workers are no longer curried by the United States government as part of agricultural development or railway construction strategies, but they are still very welcome to farmers who have trouble finding cheap unskilled labor in the U.S.

Ignacio Lozano, publisher of *La Opinion* in Los Angeles, said: "Migrants from Mexico, legal and illegal, continue to make a significant contribution to the growth of our economy, efficiently and actively filling undesirable jobs which would otherwise go unfilled. At the same time, they make an important contribution to the Mexican economy through the remittance of a good part of their earnings to their families back home."

Dr. Jorge Bustamante, researcher at El Colegio de Mexico and an expert on the undocumented workers issue.

The Silent Invasion

Thousands of Mexicans annually head for the northern border, pushed by the population explosion and other structural factors which cause un- and underemployment in Mexico. These "push factors," said Bustamante, are only recently being recognized by U.S. and Mexican investigators. Serious research, he said, can lift the veil of prejudice that so easily distorts public opinion. Bustamante likened hysterical talk of a "Wetback Invasion" or a "Silent Invasion" to the "Yellow Peril" racist fear that sprang up at the turn of the century.

Bustamante explained that the actors in this scenario must not blame one another, but must search for explanations to clarify the reality. He offered a sociological explanation for some U.S. attitudes towards Mexican undocumented workers, who, until early in the Carter administration, were still referred to by many as "braceros" or "wetbacks." Bustamante pointed to the need to find a scapegoat to explain impending recession, high unemployment and increasing civil strife.

Dr. Bustamante cited a 1974 press conference given by then Attorney General Saxby, in which Saxby related the problem of unemployment in the United States "to the presence of immigrant workers, especially Mexicans." Bustamante said two weeks later General Chapman, head of the Immigration Service, picked up Saxby's argument, and spoke of cause and effect: here are undocumented workers, here is unemployment, thus inspiring in the U.S. public the idea of crisis, and labeling the presence of Mexican undocumented workers "the Silent Invasion."

"Public opinion immediately starts to react," said Bustamante, "as though the invasion were real and accepted as such, because of the definition of it as such by a legitimate authority — Chapman in this case. People began to react as if undocumented immigration really was the cause of unemployment, welfare abuse, increases in crime statistics, health and social problems," he said.

The media, said Bustamante, had a role in coloring this perception, and one could read headlines proclaiming the "Silent Invasion" throughout the 1974-75 period.

The Tortilla Curtain

Washington Post reporter Chris Dickey, suggested that a parallel sensation was created in the Mexican press last year over the proposed 30 miles of fence at the border, which had come to be known as the "Tortilla Curtain." He said he failed to see why so much media attention had been generated by

what amounted to repair of an existing fence along a very small stretch of the 2,000-mile frontier.

Bustamante agreed the development had been overblown, but reminded Dickey of the fact that a press conference with the fence contractor had sparked the furor. The contractor had said he would "make a fence that would leave anyone who climbs it footless." Whether the contractor's comments were interpreted in Mexico as a slip, or as United States government intention, said Bustamante, the fence represented unilateralism on the part of the U.S. government. He claimed the United States saw the problem as a domestic one, curable by domestic action. He cautioned that there was a mistake in such thinking.

Need for Bilateral Approaches

"It is a frequent mistake to think that the problem can be erased through unilateral measures, as though the border separated two distinct realities. Reality cannot be kept at bay by a political boundary handed down by history," Bustamante claimed. He illustrated the point with the observation that economic measures taken by either side have repercussions on the other.

"With a recession, real or fictitious, I fear Mexicans will once again be made the scapegoat unless the role of the media is different from the past," he declared. He also questioned why the U.S. media have not revealed that undocumented workers pay taxes and social security contributions while they have no access to social assistance. Bustamante admitted that the *Wall Street Journal* had mentioned these facts in 1976, but noted that public opinion had never become aware of them.

The Colegio professor suggested that the situation will become more "explosive, poisonous and absurd as the economic crisis deepens." He emphasized that a rational agreement must be reached by both sides because of the enormous demand for labor that the U.S. is expected to experience in the near future.

What Lies Ahead?

Bustamante referred to the 1940's Baby Boom, and declared that people born at that time were now nearing the peak of their productive lives. He predicted that by 1985 the United States is going to find itself with a demand for labor as never before, particularly at unskilled levels. He warned that "undocumented Mexican workers are already contributing to the financing of retirement pensions in the U.S., but there will be trouble in financing these pensions if there are no immigrant workers."

Associated Press Director John Koehler reinforced Bustamante's prediction, quoting a Stanford University study,* which forecast that the U.S. will need 15 to 20 million immigrants by the year 2000 if it is to maintain a 3.5 percent annual growth rate. Bustamante, in turn, referred participants to an August 1979 report of the Task Force on Immigration supporting Koehler's argument, although with lower figures.

In view of the possible impact Mexican workers have on the U.S. economy, Bustamante suggested that workers and employers approach this problem in a rational way, and somehow rationalize what already exists. "Otherwise we will share an explosive border whose inter-ethnic repercussions will affect both Chicano and Anglo populations."

Jose Fonseca of *El Heraldo de Mexico* asked to what degree a *bracero* quota agreement could prevent or solve this explosive situation. Bustamante was sceptical. He said past agreements had benefitted employers but not workers. "Besides," he added, "I hate to think of the repressive force that would be required to keep those excluded from the agreement from crossing the border."

Bustamante said the Mexican government designed its industrialization program incorrectly by importing capital intensive machinery after World War II, which resulted in out-migration. He said it was unrealistic now to think that a solution could be found overnight.

Richard Leonard of the *Milwaukee Journal* asked if there was any possibility of linking future migratory labor problems to energy agreements. Bustamante replied that one should wait for the release of a study of the economic impact of migration that is being prepared by the Mexican Labor Secretariat. He said the study was in its final stages, and was to provide basic information to help gauge the costs and benefits to both countries. Its findings would be shared by both governments. He stressed that it was better to see the situation as one that has costs and benefits for both sides.

Gastarbeiter System

Wilbur Landrey of the *St. Petersburg Times* asked about the viability of establishing a type of *"gastarbeiter"* system used to regulate immigrant worker flows in Europe. Bustamante said Mexicans had studied it and found it made little sense in the U.S.-Mexico context because of the peculiar history involved, and because the system implies the establishment of institutional second-class citizenship. The only proposal for concrete action was Bustamante's — to arrive at a framework of worker-employer pacts based on the collective organization

* by Clarke Reynolds

"It is a frequent mistake to think that the problem can be erased through unilateral measures as though the border separated two distinct realities."

Hector Aguilar Camin, columnist, UnoMasUno, Mexico City.

Dr. Peter Jones, professor of history, University of Illinois at Chicago Circle.

Felix Cortes Camarillo of Mexico's Televisa. At left is Adolfo Aguilar Zinser of UnoMasUno.

of immigrant workers negotiating the price of their labor with a collective organization of employers.

Ambassador-at-large Krueger said no one policy could be considered until the United States Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy made its report, and the findings had been discussed with the Mexican government.

It became clear during the lengthy discussion that differences in perception are attributable to difference in the historical experiences of the United States and Mexico. The session closed with a look at the role Mexican Americans — Chicanos — might play in shaping the understanding Mexicans and North Americans have of one another.

The Chicano Connection

Dr. Peter Jones said the two requisites to sharing in U.S. decision making, in the "American Dream," were visibility and clout. Predictions indicate that Chicanos will be the largest definable ethnic group in the U.S. by the close of the 1980s. Los Angeles is rapidly becoming a bilingual and bicultural community. As Mexican Americans fill more elective and appointive positions in national, state and local governments, one can assume they will have a greater voice in national affairs, and in United States relations with Mexico.

Ignacio Lozano of *La Opinion* said Chicanos now have more visibility than clout, but that they will play an increasingly important role as brokers between the two countries. He said it was important to remember that Chicanos are American citizens who consider themselves as Americans first, and only secondarily as of Mexican descent.

As family ties between the Mexican and Mexican-American populations grow, Lozano predicted the two groups could be expected to pay closer attention to their governments' contacts and relations. "Given greater interest and citizen participation in our broadening relations, Mexicans and Mexican Americans can be expected to turn more and more towards the media for information on the current state of our relations and the trends which guide these relations. And it will become incumbent on those of us in the media to prepare ourselves to handle these growing responsibilities adequately and honestly," Lozano said.

PERCEPTIONS, PRISMS, PRESS

Mexican attitudes toward the United States were frequently described as "ambivalent." This attraction/repulsion factor in the relationship is one that periodically surprises members of the U.S. press, and has created a difficult climate for understanding. Mexico City's Channel 11 news director Virgilio Caballero outlined the typical Mexican media presentation of the relationship:

> "The distinctive characteristic in our relationship is one of permanent antagonism between the imperial power and a country struggling to develop and consolidate itself as a nation. They are, therefore, unequal relations, about which we should have no illusions."

El Dia director Enrique Ramirez y Ramirez attempted to explain the situation. "We Mexicans have a serious problem with regard to the United States and the American people. It is called a confusion of feelings. The channels of communications have not been opened wide; offenses have not been explained; offenses — mutual offenses if you will — still remain," he said. "Nevertheless," he continued, "there is a tremendous need to coexist through promotion of commonalities and elimination of misunderstandings, by getting to know one another."

Cultural Invasion

Adolfo Anguilar Zinser, contributor to the Mexican daily *UnoMasUno*, introduced a different theme. "For Mexico, proximity to the United States and expansion of the American consumer culture constitute a giant obstacle to our aspirations for the kind of development that serves peoples' needs." He said that over the past few decades, American values have begun to alter deeply the character of Mexican culture. "Despite the resistance offered by deep-rooted Mexican values, we are less able, by the day, to contain the 'American cultural invasion,'" claimed Aguilar Zinser.

"A great part of the explanation of Mexican ambivalence towards the U.S. can be found in this phenomenon," he said, adding that to a certain extent Mexico has become a territorial extension of the North American communications network. But, Aguilar Zinser explained, these media links had not provided a clearer perception of either country by the other. He described how the expansion of international wire services and the reproduction of articles from the American press have meant that Mexicans read more about what is happening in the United States than about what is happening in any other country.

Hector Aguilar Camin, editorial writer for *UnoMasUno*, explained: "Stories about the U.S. are ever present in the Mexican press for the same reason they are in the whole

. . . We know more, through our newspapers, about the life of actors, sportsmen, political personalities and even celebrated criminals, than about the conditions in which our own countrymen live in that country.

world's press: because political and economic decisions taken in Washington affect everyone."

Ignorance of United States Reality

Aguilar Zinser suggested, however, that informed as the Mexican public is on events in the U.S., "there is a profound ignorance in Mexico of the reality of the United States. We know more, through our newspapers, about the life of actors, sportsmen, political personalities and even celebrated criminals, than about the conditions in which our own countrymen live in that country," he said. "Thus, a strike in California lettuce fields or a speech by Cesar Chavez, events related to the Mexican people, give way to fragmentary and isolated images of a Senator Kennedy, friend of the Mexican people, and of a weakening President Carter, without any analysis of the reality."

Part of this lack of clear perceptions, on both sides, is the fact that it costs a lot of money to maintain a permanent correspondent in another country. *El Sol de Mexico* deputy director Florencio Ruiz de la Pena elaborated: "If the Mexican press at times does not present a more accurate picture of American life, I suggest this is due in part to the wire services, which provide 90 percent of our information on the United States."

Mexico Ignored

Aguilar Zinser noted that the U.S. press has traditionally ignored Mexico. "Our relative position within the United States scheme of international relations has always been subordinate to more immediate interests or to regions that are given a greater historical importance," he said. "Thus, in many parts of the United States, the southern neighbor is a remote reality, much more distant than the Middle East, Japan or Western Europe."

George Reedy, Nieman Professor of the Marquette University College of Journalism, gave a frank appraisal:

> "There is no doubt that for many years everything to the south of us, and, by the way, everything to the north, has been fairly well ignored by the American press. There is a reason for that. We looked east because most of our ancestors came from Europe; and we looked west because, somehow, at the end of the last century it became fashionable for every church in the U.S. to sustain a missionary in China. This does not mean that anyone knew anything about China, but at least it was real. What was north, what was south, was not real. You'll find precisely the same complaint if you go through Canada. Canada is not real to the American people."

Different Starting Points

Aguilar Camin thought the reasons for this lack of communication were deeper roo . He argued that the divergent starting points fo: what t ay are modern Mexico and the United State: have produc irreconcilable destinies. He traced the birth of the two nations, one of Hispanic roots, indigenous, Catholic and communal; the other Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, founded on initiative, risk and individual privacy. Aguilar Camin expanded:

> "One arrived at dependence and erratic neocolonial development, its identity and nationality barely saved by the 1910 popular eruption. The other became the vigorous imperialistic, military and industrial power whose enormous natural resources, technical and intellectual, gave birth to the greatest capitalist civilization in the modern world — the gendarme of the West."

Instinctive Anti-Americanism

Aguilar Camin said that Mexican sensitivity toward the U.S. stemmed from an "instinctive anti-Americanism," rooted in the suspicion that has resulted from several successive invasions.

Dr. Peter Jones, history professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago, called that kind of perception "*reductive*." "The only hope for our relations in the future," he said, "is, quite simply, that we can reduce these stereotypical ways of looking at each other. We hear of American aggressiveness, the American belief in technology and the superiority of modernization; and we have the Latin American view that the United States is grossly materialistic. This is reductive, simplistic, and it does not help change anything," he said.

Study Centers

Jones suggested a way to change matters is to develop a more complex view of one another — a human view. "Each society should begin to move studies of the other culture ahead at great speed," he proposed. But Aguilar Camin pointed out that there is only one research center for the study of the U.S. history and current affairs in Mexico. He said the Mexican president only a short time ago had addressed students at the National Autonomous University of Mexico with the idea of earmarking an ample budget to this type of systematic study. "Incredibly, the proposal was received with surprise and indignation," he recalled.

Turning to the U.S., Aguilar Camin said the Library of Congress, the Bancroft Library at Berkeley, or the Latin

American collection at the University of Texas at Austin were all more complete and accessible for the investigation of certain aspects of Mexican reality than any Mexican archives. "Nevertheless, the study of Latin America in the United States is marginal," he said.

Legends to Overcome

Ramirez y Ramirez of *El Dia* took up Peter Jones' argument and said he agreed that Latin Americans have gone too far in fostering the legend of the United States as a nation of utilitarian and materialistic people. He applauded the way the nation founded by persecuted and immigrant peoples had forged a dream of liberty. "The legend, however, is exaggerated — it is an image that has been fuelled by resentment. But we cannot change history, only the course of history. The media has a great task in this new presentation of facts in perspective," Ramirez y Ramirez said.

Press Coverage Contrasts

Andres Rozental, Mexico's foreign relations director for North American affairs, offered some perspective. He said Mexican media take more notice of the United States than the latter does of Mexico. Both press corps, however, give space to spectacular news about the bilateral relation, "but the American press corps does not usually show much interest in what could be called our routine relations. Thus," Rozental continued, "the announcement of an agreement on natural gas is of vital interest to the northern consumer. Or an oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico becomes the object of hundreds of commentaries. On the other hand, a routine work trip by the Mexican president to Washington awakens no interest at all in the U.S. press, while in Mexico presidential visits are approached with what I would call saturation coverage."

Assymetry in Relations

U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs John Bushnell commented: "There is a basic assymetry. When the United States does something, when there is a visit or event between the United States and Mexico, it is more important to Mexico, relatively speaking, than to the United States and gets more attention in the Mexican press. That's inevitable in the diversity of interests we have in the United States. I don't have the impression," he said, "that either the U.S. or Mexican press corps in general presents a very balanced or full view of the other side's interests and views on an issue. I'm not even sure they present a very good view of their own country's view of an issue. This is probably because relations between the United States and Mexico, because of our long frontier and the many shared problems, tend to be complex, complicated and technical.

"Because the way to hold a reader's attention is to make something simple, emotional and exciting, the basic role of the press in presenting complicated bilateral issues is very hard," Bushnell said. "The situation is not unique to Mexico, but characteristic of such issues everywhere," he added, "and one of the best things to be said about the discovery of oil in Mexico is that it has caused a lot of people in the U.S. to pay more attention to Mexico and to learn something about it."

Shortsighted Reporting

Mexican economist Gustavo Esteva offered the example of *Newsweek's* having synthesized the reluctance of Mexico to sell its natural gas to the United States below its asking price as "a problem of the Mexican president's machismo." This, said Esteva, was selling a prejudice. "I believe that of all the motives for Mexico's position, the least relevant was the president's machismo. But in the U.S. context this makes sense, because it corresponds to an American prejudice about Mexican machismo," he argued.

By the same token, Esteva took the example of a Mexico City daily which headlined a story on the symposium's discussion the previous day, "The United States Prefers To Deal With Military Governments."

The discussion had been on the relative hemispheric roles of Mexico and the United States. "This is a question of media giving the clientele what it wants to hear," he said. The headline corresponded to generalized Latin American acceptance of the U.S. as a supporter of military governments, even though John Bushnell had clearly defined a marked change in the United States role. Esteva called it the fundamental responsibility of the media to divulge new currents and nuances, and not myopically ignore them.

The same point was made by Aguilar Camin of *UnoMasUno*. "It is revealing," he said, "that U.S. press interest should center on the Ixtoc I oil blowout in the Bay of Campeche, and not on the speech presented by the Mexican president at the United Nations on Mexico's international petroleum policy." The consequence, he said, was "mutual poverty in the handling of information that could contribute to reciprocal understanding. Intense localism, and an apparent disdain for everything that is not of priority in the context of American foreign policy, have shut off that country's public to the possibility of being really informed on the problems and events in Mexico."

United States Press Not Foreign Policy Voice

George Reedy made the point that the U.S. press is definitely not geared to expressing American foreign policy. "Nobody in the United States ever said it should," he noted. "What it is there for is to supply the American people with facts that enable them to debate the issues they want to debate," he pointed out.

Reedy pleaded that the discussion not take on an unrealistic dimension by attributing to the U.S. press the function of systematically presenting policy decisions in a concerted way. The problem being addressed was not so much a problem of the press as of two societies of which the press is a part. "The term 'American press' is being used to describe something that doesn't exist," he said. "There is no such thing as 'an American press' that makes a decision, that says from here on out we are going to be nice to Mexico, or that tomorrow we are going to be nasty to Mexico."

United States Press Has Many Voices

Reedy admitted that there are commonalities among U.S. media organizations but emphasized that they were not the kind of commonalities of an institution that can sit down and make press policy decisions. He said the United States press doesn't even cover the United States as "the United States," and that it is only rarely united in a common front, as, for example, on the declaration of a war.

Aguilar Zinser and others explained that Mexico still tends to interpret U.S. press coverage of Mexico as speaking with a common tongue.

Mexican Press Reactions

"The Mexican media reaction to the way Mexico has been presented in U.S. media is legitimate, but has been lacking in depth and analysis," Anguilar Zinser said. He lamented the fact that Mexican media representatives do not reflect when they hear criticism from the United States. "They do not reflect on what the explanation for the criticism might be, in what context it was made or under what circumstances it was expressed. The press simply transmits the news of such criticism to the Mexican people, thereby creating a climate of tension, which a lack of rational analysis engenders." For Aguilar Zinser, the important point was not that the U.S. press might criticize Mexico from time to time, but how the Mexican press reported such criticism back home.

Press As Opinion Molder

Ramirez y Ramirez explained that the press influences public opinion as much as it reflects it. As an example, he pointed to a Mexico City paper, *Novedades*, whose motto is "Informs and Creates Opinion." "I think that our experience as outsiders, who for so many years have received news, columns and editorials from the American press, allows us to state that the U.S. press obeys an identical interest and follows a very uniform trend. This does not only happen in the case of war," he said, "but in many instances." He spoke of how news services give uniformity to information, and said that an objective analysis of the Mexican media would lead to the same findings of uniform publication and reporting trends. The results, he noted, have been that the media play a leading role in United States-Mexican affairs. In the past, as in the present, he said, many issues in the bilateral relationship have been predetermined, and even prejudiced, by the media.

Ramirez y Ramirez questioned whether the media in both countries properly respond to the complex and difficult relationship. "What is the outcome of our 200-year relationship regarding communication and information?" he asked, and concluded that the two countries have not come to know each other deeply.

Ignacio Lozano, publisher of *La Opinion* in Los Angeles, said the task facing the mass media in bilateral relations was to learn more about one another's cultures. "In my judgment this is long overdue," he said. "We need to learn about our cultures, our political systems, our social structures and how we perceive our place in an increasingly complex and interdependent world. I am firmly convinced," Lozano continued, "that most of our failings in covering each other are the result of ignorance as to how our two systems work."

Independence from Government

Lozano called it imperative that the press corps of both countries maintain complete independence from government in the context of relations between the two governments. "If we in the press ever appear to be working in concert on any important issues in our bilateral relations, we must be able to convince the outside observer that we are truly independent of government." His remarks echoed Ramirez y Ramirez' statement that diplomacy should be left to the diplomats.

Role of Press in Bilateral Affairs

Mexico's Director for North American Affairs Andres Rozental cited two instances when the press was used by government to transmit policy statements. The first occurred when Ambassador Krueger held a press conference only hours after having delivered a diplomatic note to the Mexican government on indemnification negotiations for the Ixtoc I oil gusher, and before the Mexican government was given a

chance to reply. Rozental interpreted the use of the press at that time as a move to appease criticism alleging inaction on damage claims of North American citizens. The publicity, he said, obliged the Mexican government to reply through the same public organs.

A second example was related to the long negotiations between the two governments on the sale of Mexican natural gas. Rozental argued that such a highly politicized debate had naturally been followed closely by media in both countries and that both delegations had readily used the media to report why various positions had been drawn up or rejected.

"In my judgment, these two cases demonstrate the vital importance of the role the media play in our bilateral relationship. The way the media perceive the bilateral relationship very often conditions relations for the two governments involved," said Rozental. He also made the point that third countries base their perception almost entirely on what is printed in the press.

HEMISPHERIC RELATIONS

During the symposium the relative roles played by Mexico and the United States in Latin America and the Caribbean were discussed in some detail by John Bushnell, U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state, and Alejandro Sobarzo, Mexican congressman and member of the Foreign Relations Commission of the Mexican House of Representatives.

Traditional U.S. Role

The United States has traditionally been the most important foreign country for Latin American and Caribbean nations with its generalized hemispheric Good Neighbor Policy and the Alliance for Progress. However, the United States' relative position is changing as Europe, Japan, the Soviet Union, and the larger nations of the region all play a more important role in every conceivable area of interaction.

Mexican Policy

Mexico has an increasing impact on its neighbors in the region. An oil producer and rapidly industrializing nation, Mexico believes in the need for a New International Economic Order. It is an active third world spokesman in the North-South dialogue, and is a leader in developing-nation fora and interparliamentary conferences. It is a member neither of OPEC nor of the Non-Aligned movement, preferring to take its own path with allies chosen for mutual benefit. Non-intervention is an important feature of Mexican foreign policy.

Non-Intervention, the Mexican Context

"Non-intervention applies not only to military force, but to all forms of interference in the political, economic or cultural affairs of a sovereign state," said Congressman Sobarzo. He lamented the frequency with which the American continent becomes the scene of *coups d'etat*, the establishment of anti-democratic regimes and flagrant violations of the most elemental human rights. He added that it was not easy to maintain relations with oppressive regimes, but not always possible to suspend relations either.

In May 1979 when massive violation of human rights took place in Nicaragua, Mexican relations with the Somoza regime were broken. (They were later renewed when the five-member junta assumed control of the government.) And in the cases of El Salvador and Bolivia, which had both recently undergone military coups, Mexico maintained its missions in both countries without passing judgment, except for a censure by the Chamber of Deputies of the ousting of the legitimate democratic Bolivian government.

Sobarzo detailed Mexico's posture in regional fora and cited the text of the Non-Intervention Protocol presented by Mexico and accepted at the 1936 Inter-American Peace Conference in Buenos Aires: "The contracting parties declare inadmissible any direct or indirect intervention for whatever motive by any of them in the internal or external affairs of any of the other parties." That precept, added Sobarzo, applies to states, groups of states or to the regional body, the Organization of American States.

In that context, he expressed the displeasure with which Mexico viewed endeavors to have the OAS negotiate the establishment of a transitional government in Nicaragua in the last days of Somoza. "It would have been undue intervention in internal affairs," he said. "OAS intervention would have prevented the free determination of a people who had fought intrepidly to do away with an oppressive regime and to set up the form of government to which they had a legitimate right," he stressed, and would have been tantamount to "treating the Nicaraguan people like minors."

In another example, Sobarzo mentioned that when tensions flared in 1978 between Chile and Peru, the United States was among those considering dispatching the OAS Inter American Peace Force. That, too, would have been seen by Mexico as intervention, he continued, and similarly "the CIA role in the overthrow of the legitimately elected government of Salvador

Allende in Chile in 1973, and U.S. support for the Pinochet dictatorship."

United States Policy

John Bushnell, U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs, said the United States was moving away from the past when it tended to support the status quo in the hemisphere, now concentrating its policy decisions country by country, subregion by subregion. He suggested four areas in which the United States is actively encouraging change in Latin America:

- improving human rights
- reaching out to the underprivileged of society, distinct from the policy of many Latin American governments of promoting the growth of the middle class
- nuclear non-proliferation
- searching for the "moral" stance in the many and multifaceted relations it has with each nation in the region, particularly on arms exports

Bushnell said the Carter administration was in favor of non-intervention, but said the definition of the term is not always clear. At one end of the spectrum the meaning is very clear, he said: it means not sending in the marines. "Beyond the military or paramilitary," commented Bushnell, "the question of what 'non-intervention' really means is a lot murkier." For example, he said, the United States has the privilege of stopping aid, cutting off Export-Import Bank funds or blocking military arms sales. "Is this intervention?" he asked. "Is the spread of ideas intervention?"

Nuclear Weapons Free Zone

On proliferation, Bushnell said Mexico is taking the lead in the region through the Treaty of Tlatelolco which established a nuclear weapons free zone in Latin America. Drawn up by Mexico in 1968, the treaty was subscribed to by every Latin American country except Cuba, as well as by China and the Soviet Union. The U.S. Senate has yet to ratify one part of the protocol referring to territories in the region for which the United States is responsible, principally Puerto Rico.

Arms Sales

"Where the Mexicans reach for non-proliferation, we aim at restraint in the production and sale of arms," related Bushnell. He spoke of how the United States weighs every arms sale to the region on moral grounds, balancing the effects of not exporting weapons with the harsh facts of life that if it doesn't sell, the customer is likely to turn to another supplier and buy in any case — often at a higher price — from the French, another NATO country, or the Russians.

Congressman Alejandro Sobarzo Loaiza, member of the Foreign Relations Commission of the Mexican House of Representatives. At left is John Bushnell, United States deputy assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs.

David Anable of the *Christian Science Monitor* asked Sobarzo what the Mexican government has done, in terms of active diplomacy, to censure regional countries which circumvent the U.S. arms embargo. Sobarzo answered that since the inception of the United Nations, Mexico has let its voice be heard in all fora speaking out against arms buildups. He added that Mexico spends only 0.7 percent of its GNP on weapons. "In a world where a third of the population lives in misery and want, the billions of dollars spent annually on the manufacture and perfection of weapons offer a somber and dramatic contrast," Sobarzo asserted.

Law of the Sea

One divergent point in the presentations by Sobarzo and Bushnell, reflective of different intellectual traditions, arose on the subject of the U.N. Law of the Sea Conference, negotiations aimed at establishing a universally recognized convention to govern territorial seas and fishing zones. In April 1979, the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea was close to reaching an agreement to fix territorial sea limits at 12 miles and fishing rights at 200 miles. Mexico was in agreement with those limits, and was surprised when the United States announced it would not respect any territorial sea limit over three miles. Sobarzo said the U.S. posture did not contribute to the improvement of relations between the United States and Latin American countries.

Bushnell explained the U.S. government's reason for the decision. Since the final text of the meeting had not yet been approved, the U.S. government had not accepted any new jurisdiction in its legal system. And since there was no law on the matter, the government could not act as if there were one. On the other hand, Sobarzo said that because the conference participants had arrived at a 95 percent or more consensus on each of the articles under discussion, Mexico recognized that existing international norms, soon to be codified in orderly texts, were already part of the accepted law in force.

Colonialism

The theme that seemed of most concern to Mexico was the presence of colonialism on the continent. Congressman Sobarzo noted that at the ceremony in which the transisthmus canal was returned to the Panamanian people, it was Mexican President Jose Lopez Portillo who spoke for the eleven Latin American heads of state present. Sobarzo quoted his remarks: "With this act, the disgrace of colonialism is being buried." The situation in the Canal Zone, Sobarzo said, was for the Mexican government and people a typical vestige of colonialism in Latin America, and "we hope that in the not too distant future the last vestiges of colonialism will disappear from our continent."

Guantanamo Naval Base

Bill Hosokawa of the *Denver Post* asked whether Sobarzo referred to the U.S. military base at Guantanamo. He coupled his question with a query on whether Mexico was as deeply concerned about the expansion of Cuban influence in Central America as the United States apparently was. "Guantanamo is, indeed, a vestige of colonialism in our eyes," said Sobarzo. He added that Mexico considers any military base anywhere in the world held against the will of the people within whose territory it lies as a colonialist stance. As for Cuba, Sobarzo said, "the presence of any foreign country should not be feared in itself," adding that "doors cannot be closed to ideas." What is of concern, he reiterated, "is the interventionist act."

Aid

Martin Luis Guzman, director of the Mexican weekly review *Tiempo*, referred to Bushnell's discussion of intervention through the blocking of loans and concessions and asked just what the word "aid" meant. "It appears that a government and its companies can grant aid, but when a private bank does so it becomes a commercial transaction," he said. Bushnell defined aid as financial and technical assistance financed by taxpayers and given on concessional terms. "Thus," he said, "investments by private firms and loans from banks, including loans from the Export-Import Bank, are not aid. They are commercial transactions. Loans from the U.S. government," he said, "were given on a case by case basis, with the hope expressed to the receiving government that the assistance would be used to benefit the poorest sectors of the population."

Development Strategy and the Poor

Stryker McGuire of *Newsweek* asked whether that meant Latin American governments objected to giving aid to the lowest strata. Bushnell replied: "The basic development policy of a number of Latin American countries — I think this may include Mexico — is to give heavy emphasis to the development of the industrial sector, the expansion of infrastructure and the rapid expansion of the middle class." He noted that the middle class expands by drawing from the poorer groups, and that the U.S. prefers to see more balanced development, reaching out quickly and definitively to much larger numbers of the poor.

Some 40 percent of Mexico's population lives off the land. This massive peasant sector, said the College of Economists

agricultural expert, Gustavo Esteva, has been spurned in the past by all sectors of the ideological spectrum. "However, researchers are constantly surprised to find that these groups — persistently rejected by the urban masses — reject conventional attempts at their transformation and survive through thick and thin," Esteva observed. He predicted that industrial growth in Mexico will continue to be subsidized by the economically deprived peasant sector. But, he said, peasants will advance as agronomists see the wisdom of combining traditional countryside techniques with modern science, as they are increasingly learning to do.

Mexico and the Developed World

One of the issues arising from the growth of the middle class and the industrial sector in Latin America, according to Bushnell, is that there is no logical route of progression whereby a country attains the status of a developed nation. The sharp line dividing the LDCs — lesser developed countries — and the members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is extremely hard to cross, he said. There is no definite measure for a country that does well economically and advances socially and politically, Bushnell underlined. "Therefore, when countries such as Mexico and Brazil knock at the door, policy tensions are raised between us because of the lack of an orderly transition process," he explained.

Bushnell said that it is in the interests of a developing country to receive the special benefits, such as the Generalized System of Preferences, available to it. But in other areas, the U.S. government becomes concerned. He gave an example of how OECD countries had recently noticed that steel export expansion was most rapid not in OECD nations, but in three or four "developing" countries. Mexico is one of the countries recently invited to join the OECD's steel committee. "It seemed that if these countries were not brought into the club, it would be very difficult to have discussions about the worldwide steel market," he said.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of Commerce Abraham Katz said that Mexico should not be afraid to be drawn into discussions with the industrialized countries. He predicted that in the next few years Mexico will realize a surplus in its trade accounts. This will be due in part to expected oil revenues, said Katz, but, more importantly, to an increasing competitiveness in non-traditional exports — particularly from the industrial sector.

TRADE RELATIONS

The United States absorbs 70 percent of Mexico's exports. Two-thirds of Mexico's foreign trade is with the United States. Mexico is fourth in the list of United States trading partners, and will undoubtedly move to second or third, according to Katz.

Importance of Oil

"Trade between our two countries is entering a new era of importance," he said. He pointed to the oil boom as the obvious factor, stating that oil is transforming the Mexican economy and its prospects. "The coincidence of a worldwide energy crisis and the discovery of vast hydrocarbon resources in Mexico augur well for greater domestic growth as well as increased exports and imports," Katz affirmed.

Mexico is well aware of the significance of these hydrocarbon reserves: 45.8 billion barrels proven and 200 billion potential. The Mexican government, through its oil monopoly Pemex (Petroleos Mexicanos), signed export agreements with Japan, France and Spain in 1979, and is moving away from its dependence on the U.S. market. Whereas almost 90 percent of all Mexican crude oil exports went to the United States in 1979, the figure is expected to diminish to 60 percent by the end of 1980. That does not mean Mexico will sell less oil to the U.S. than at present — around 500,000 barrels a day — but that production will steadily rise from a year-end figure of 1,913,000 barrels a day to at least 2,250,000 by the end of 1980. It does mean that Mexico will probably not increase its exports to the United States as part of its policy to diversify markets.

But there are voices in Mexico which caution the government not to convert Mexico into an oil state. This current of thought warns against Mexico becoming a large scale supplier of crude oil to the United States, and is reflected in a suspicion that the greater interest shown Mexico by its northern neighbor is due to her new oil discoveries.

Oil Discoveries Waken Interest

Repeatedly throughout the symposium the members of the Mexican media raised questions that seemed based on a conviction that only the announcement of gigantic oil discoveries in Mexico had put the nation on the map. Aguilar Zinser said that since 1976 Mexico's petroleum deposits unleashed an unexpected interest in Mexico. "In a few months, in a boomerang effect characteristic of the way U.S. political interests are expressed, there was an intense focus on all problems related to Mexico," he said. He claimed one can

now frequently read editorials in the United States press reflecting on how Mexico has been ignored for so long, but that now oil offers a chance to know the southern neighbor better. The upshot, he lamented, was that if any conclusions are to be drawn from the new American attitude, they are that the lack of knowledge about Mexico persists.

John Bushnell admitted that there were spokesmen in the U.S., though generally not in the government, who see Mexico's energy as a solution to American problems. But he thought that view not widespread. "Of course," he pointed out, "the United States is pleased to buy either oil or gas under the arrangements worked out with the Mexican government. But that is now, and will probably remain, a rather small part of the U.S. energy supply."

Though the charge that Mexico's natural resources are the overriding factor in an unusual U.S. interest in Mexico was repeatedly voiced throughout the symposium, not all Mexican participants made a point of it.

"Mexico's petroleum gives it an exceptional opportunity to achieve financial self-determination and to start out on a promising road to development," said Gustavo Esteva of the College of Economists. He clarified by saying petroleum need not be the exclusive key to a possible change in the structure of bilateral trade. And Katz saw the potential for total trade between the two countries to reach 70 to 80 billion dollars by the middle of the present decade. "We are talking about numbers so high they imply a qualitative as well as a quantitative change in the United States-Mexico relationship," he said.

Mexico's Development Strategy

Katz sketched an outlook in which Mexican manufactured exports to the U.S. would increase, and a special relationship, characterized by sectoral agreements, would develop. But he emphasized the principle that "there is no free lunch" in economics, and that Mexican industry could only hope to gain access to markets in the developed world through efficiency and competitiveness. "Otherwise," he cautioned, "Mexican industry will swallow its oil surplus — or even the Saudi Arabian oil surplus — just as it has swallowed the surpluses in its tourist and agricultural accounts."

Katz expressed the hope that Mexico will use what he termed its "new bonanza" in oil revenue in the intelligent development of its economy. He said the inefficient approach would entail using the proceeds of oil exports to pay for uneconomic protectionist development policies that would cause enormous inflation. The economic repercussions, he pointed out, would rebound on the United States as well. Esteva responded by saying such apprehensions were groundless. "As Mexico uses its oil revenue to provide incentives to industry, so, too, it will sow resources in the countryside," he said, quoting President Lopez Portillo's Third State of the Nation address of September 1979. "This will allow us to produce a more balanced and powerful society capable of producing its own food," said Esteva. He added: "The central question in years to come will be how rationally the nation uses its resources for internal needs while exporting the surplus."

Winter Vegetables

Winter vegetable exports to the United States are worth 200 million dollars a year. Total agricultural exports, including livestock, have risen in recent years to 700 million dollars. However, structural deficiencies in Mexican agriculture oblige the country to import concurrently about two million tons of grains a year. The figure for 1980 is forecast at four million tons due to crop failures caused by drought and frosts.

Katz mentioned the legal controversy over Mexican winter vegetable exports to the United States. Florida growers have labelled the exports "dumping," even though the 1921 Anti-Dumping Act has never applied to perishable goods. The claim has been dismissed by the U.S. Treasury, but the final decision will be reached by the U.S. Department of Commerce. "As a member of the Commerce Department, I can only plead that some accommodation be reached between the U.S. and Mexican growers, so that we have a viable long-term arrangement," Katz said.

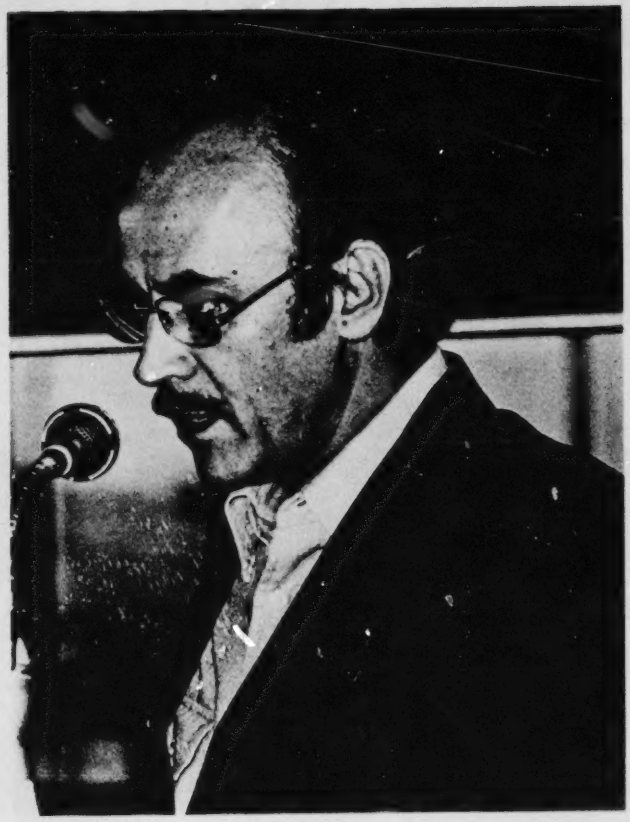
GATT

Esteva expressed concerns about schemes to enter the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade). In a country with more than 25 million peasants producing food, which imports grains to subsist, entering the GATT, he said, is not as important as the decision behind entering. He explained: "What has me worried is an orientation that puts Mexico's productive and commercial decisions into the logic of an international market that has generally not favored countries like Mexico. When analyzing GATT, it is indispensable to think of all the political and economic ramifications." Esteva's argument was that entering GATT, and opening up to the vigorous competition that implied, would aggravate the unequal structures the country is trying to correct. "The advantages" he said, "would be illusory."

Katz thought otherwise. He described how the current

. . . our relationship has benefitted from the perception of equality and non-dependence, and avoided the unfortunate aspects of the aid-giving and aid-receiving relationship.

Abraham Katz, United States deputy assistant secretary of commerce.



Gustavo A. Esteva, member of the College of Economics, Mexico City.

Mexican strategy was one of reversing its postwar import substitution drive and heavy protection, because of the tremendous cost the strategy was having on the rest of the economy, particularly on the peasant. So, having imported capital goods and built up an industry, Mexico now finds that its oil earnings allow it to pay for resources out of current earnings.

"You can follow whatever development strategy you like, and still be a member of the GATT," Katz said, citing India with its crushing population and poverty problem, and Korea with a massive, competitive industrial apparatus, as two different types of less-developed-country members of GATT. He pointed out that the codes adopted in the recent round of multilateral trade negotiations provided valuable standards of international conduct in the trade field and have been tailored in important respects to meet the needs of developing countries.

"We in the United States are enormously sympathetic to Mexico's desire to determine its own economic strategy and course," he said, mentioning the pride with which Mexico has traditionally refused foreign aid, opting to do things itself.

Equality and Non-Dependence

"I think our relationship has benefitted from the perception of equality and non-dependence, and avoided the unfortunate aspects of the aid-giving and aid-receiving relationship. It is much more satisfactory to have one's relationship based on trade and investment," Katz remarked. Within this framework, specific trade agreements will have to be worked out as things

go forward. He pointed to some industries that are obvious choices for this type of special relationship, citing the agreement on border industries and the special modalities in the textile relationship. He argued that both sides be inventive and propose mutually advantageous sectoral arrangements.

North American Common Market

Millard Browne of the *Buffalo Evening News* raised an idea (suggested by California Governor Jerry Brown and ex-Governor of Texas John Connally) for Canada, the United States and Mexico to form a community working in a mutually beneficial way to solve the United States' need for energy, while finding answers to Mexico's and Canada's special problems. Virgilio Caballero of Channel 11, economist Gustavo Esteva and Abraham Katz of the U.S. Department of Commerce gave a united thumbs down to such an initiative.

"From Mexico's point of view, such a common market would be impossible because it would be a structurally unequal unity that would deepen inequalities as time went on," said Esteva. He said the United States and Mexico could not be considered as two homogenous realities whose contact would generate development. "Universal experience shows that contact between two unequal entities with this type of imbalance only contributes to the domination of one over the other, instead of promoting cooperative growth," he said. Esteva cited the failure earlier in this century of the Japanese proposal to found coprosperity spheres — an idea rejected by the general conviction that such pacts only bring prosperity to those who propose them.

Caballero argued that Mexico and the United States still have many political and economic problems to face in establishing a fair two-way system of exchange. "To add a third country, Canada, would multiply the difficulties between a country that has not yet solved its internal structural problems and two incomparably more advanced nations," he said. "We cannot look at a North American common market in legitimate terms until Mexico solves its problem of the lack of a proper domestic market and establishes fiscal reform that will allow it to find its development resources within the country — not by increasing the foreign debt," he declared. Caballero believed that Mexico would face the apparently fatal destiny of raw material supplier. "This would aggravate its internal difficulties and obstruct the association's functioning, if not in terms of equality, at least in elemental justice," he said.

Abraham Katz said he found himself in agreement with these two points of view, but reached the conclusion differently. He cited European Common Market founder Jean Monnet's principle that members of a common market should enjoy the perception of equality. In the first years of the EEC's existence, France was convinced it would be swamped by German industry, but in fact enjoyed enormous growth under conditions of a customs union and free competition. Likewise, Spain plans to join the EEC, and has undergone a period of industrial development that gives it the confidence that it will be able to face the competition. Katz projected a parallel situation with Mexico in relation to the United States and Canada.

"It's conceivable that in time, as Mexico industrializes and this results in highly competitive activity, that one might begin to contemplate relationships pointing to some closer form of economic ties, either a free trade area or a common market," he mused. But for the time being, he suggested concentrating on the sectoral arrangements highlighted previously. "In sum," he concluded, "the future of United States-Mexico trade is bright, but problems loom, problems that call for imaginative solutions."

STEPS TO FURTHER UNDERSTANDING

At the last session of the symposium, William Block, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* publisher and vice-chairman of the International Press Institute, suggested that the two countries exchange newsmen for a four-week period. Four weeks spent on a counterpart newspaper would serve as more than an introduction to the workings of U.S. and Mexican journalism. The experience would point out both the ideas each has of itself, and the perception each has of the other. Block also announced that he would propose to the London headquarters of IPI that Mexico be invited to form a committee and participate in IPI deliberations.

Summarizing his thoughts at the end of the extended and far-reaching discussion that had taken place, Block said: "If we can avoid slogans, if we can better analyze the complexities, if we approach problems with good will, if we can avoid the temptation to ascribe evil motives to the other party, if we can escape the bitter cynicism which is too frequently the journalist's badge — then I think we can make a contribution to our respective societies."

Enrique Ramirez y Ramirez, director of Mexico City's *El Dia*, closed with the following remarks: "I think this forum is a self-evident demonstration that we have coexisted for 200 years and not been able to make ourselves deeply known to each other. We have been unable to achieve a deep knowledge by Americans of the Mexican people, and we have failed in

. . . coexistence based on promoting points of confidence, minimizing differences, eliminating injustice . . . this is the main task of our new history.

getting the Mexican people to know the American people. . . . In the span of this seminar more in-depth things have been said about both our countries than have been said in many years by American and Mexican newspapers, magazines and books. . . . If we really want to contribute to peaceful, respectful and fruitful coexistence between our two countries, we have to know each other more deeply. This should go far beyond the anecdotes, the typical examples and the stereotypes, because these attitudes are strongly influenced by emotion, historical resentment and ideological and political trends. . . . There exists a tremendous and final need for us to coexist. There is a physical coexistence based mainly on mechanical factors, and there is another kind of coexistence based on promoting points of confidence, minimizing differences, eliminating injustice and really looking for an integrated coexistence. I think this is the main task of our new history."

William Block, publisher of the Pittsburgh Post Gazette and vice chairman of the International Press Institute, speaking at the closing dinner of the symposium, held in the courtyard of the Mexico City Museum.

PARTICIPANTS (with affiliations at the time of the Oaxtepec Symposium)

Speakers

Ambassador Andres Rozental, Director General for North America, Foreign Relations Ministry of Mexico
Ambassador-at-large Robert Krueger, United States Coordinator for U.S.-Mexican Affairs
Hector Aguilar Camin, Columnist, *UnoMasUno*, Mexico City
Adolfo Aguilar Zinser, Researcher, *UnoMasUno*, Mexico City
John Bushnell, United States Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs
Jorge Bustamante, Member, Colegio de Mexico
Virgilio Caballero, News Director, Channel 11, Mexico City
Gustavo A. Esteva, Member, College of Economics, Mexico City
Peter Jones, Professor of History, University of Illinois at Chicago Circle, Chicago, Illinois
Abraham Katz, United States Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce
Ignacio Lozano, Editor and Publisher, *La Opinion*, Los Angeles, California
Enrique Ramirez y Ramirez, Editor, *El Dia*, Mexico City
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Congressman Alejandro Sobarzo Loaiza, Member, Commission on Foreign Relations, Chamber of Deputies, Mexico City

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Millard C. Brown, Editor of the Editorial Page, *Buffalo Evening News*, Buffalo, New York
Christopher Dickey, Reporter, *The Washington Post*, Washington, D.C.
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UNITED STATES-MEXICO
COMMUNICATION MEDIA SYMPOSIUM

Participants in the Second United States-Mexico Communication Media Symposium. Photograph taken following a luncheon at the Tabachines Golf Club in Cuernavaca.

Additional copies of this report may be obtained from The Johnson Foundation, Racine, Wisconsin 53401.

Also available from The Johnson Foundation are copies of *Mexico-United States Relations*, the report of the earlier conference held at Wingspread in March 1979.

During the symposium at Oaxtepec five radio interviews were recorded for The Johnson Foundation's "Conversations from Wingspread" radio series:

English Language

R-663. THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO
Interview with John Bushnell, United States Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs

R-664. THE MEDIA AND U.S.-MEXICAN RELATIONS
Interview with Nick Williams, Assistant Foreign Editor, *Los Angeles Times*, and Barclay Jameson, Editor *El Paso Times*

R-665. MEXICO AND ITS FUTURE
Interview with Dr. Edmund Flores, Director, Mexican National Council for Science and Technology

Spanish Language

S-1. THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO
Interview with Dr. Edmund Flores, Director, Mexican National Council for Science and Technology

S-2. THE MIGRANT MEXICAN
Interview with Dr. Jorge Bustamante, Colegio de Mexico

Cassette tapes of these interviews may be obtained from The Johnson Foundation, Racine, Wisconsin 53401.

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